

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3478

INFO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KABUL 4751

E. O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, AF, LY

SUBJECT: PACHA GUL APPOINTED AFGHAN AMBASSADOR TO LIBYA

1. KABUL MEDIA JULY 3 CARRIED A TERSE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF PACHA GUL AS THE AFGHAN AMBASSADOR IN TRIPOLI, THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROTOCOL OFFICE HAS NOW CONFIRMED THAT THE AMBASSADOR, WHO HAS BEEN THE AFGHAN ENVOY TO BULGARIA FOR ABOUT THE PAST THREE YEARS, WILL BE RESIDENT IN TRIPOLI, THUS ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITIES FORMERLY HANDLED BY THE AFGHAN AMBASSADOR RESIDENT IN CAIRO.

2. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR PACHA GUL, IN HIS EARLY THIRTIES, IS A TRAINED ENGINEER AND FORMER AIR FORCE OFFICER WHO WAS EDUCATED IN THE SOVIET UNION AND WHO HAS A RUSSIAN WIFE. HE WAS ONE OF THE PRIME MOVERS IN THE 1973 COUP D'ETAT WHICH BROUGHT MOHAMMAD DAOUD TO POWER, AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY NAMED AS MINISTER OF FRONTIER AFFAIRS. VARIOUS REPORTS PLACED HIM AMONG

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THE GROUP OF "LEFTISTS" IN THE INITIAL DAOUD CABINET. PACHA GUL BECAME THE FIRST MINISTER IN THIS CABINET TO FALL FROM GRACE, AND ALTHOUGH THE REASONS FOR HIS DISMISSAL WERE UNCLEAR AT THE TIME, IN THE INTERVENING YEARS A NUMBER OF THESE "LEFTISTS" HAVE LOST THEIR POSITIONS IN KABUL AND HAVE BEEN "EXILED" TO VARIOUS AMBASSADORIAL

POSTS ABROAD.

3. THE APPOINTMENT OF A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR IN TRIPOLI COULD REFLECT AN AFGHAN DESIRE TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE QADHAFI REGIME, WITH THE ULTIMATE AIM BEING TO SOLICIT SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM OIL-RICH LIBYA. FOR HIS PART, LIBYAN AMBASSADOR ELHERIK MAINTAINS A FAIRLY HIGH PROFILE IN KABUL, AND IT COULD BE THAT THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT DECIDED THIS WAS A PROPITIOUS MOMENT TO ASSUME A PROPER DIPLOMATIC SYMMETRY. ON THE OTHER HAND, BULGARIA IS GENERALLY VIEWED BY THE AFGHAN AUTHORITIES AS A ROUGH EQUIVALENT TO AN ASSIGNMENT TO SIBERIA FOR ITS MORE RADICAL AND UNSUCCESSFUL POLITICOS, AND PACHA GUL IS BY NO MEANS A PRESTIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RULING MOHAMMADZAI CLAN, THUS, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THIS PARTICULAR DIPLOMATIC MOVE WILL STIMULATE CLOSER AFGHAN-LIBYAN RELATIONS.

4. PERHAPS EMBASSY SOFIA CAN ELABORATE REGARDING PACHA GUL'S ACCESSIBILITY TO HIS AMERICAN COLLEAGUES DURING HIS TENURE IN BULGARIA.
ELIOT

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